

February 8, 2011

Dear Senator Harp,

As a concerned parent, I would like to draw your attention to the plight of charter schools in Connecticut. While other state-funded entities are wringing their hands about not receiving any more money next year, some charter schools are in danger of drastically reducing their capacity to educate their students because they have not received any more money this year, or the year before that, or the year before that. And this from a baseline of per-pupil funding that is 25% less on average than at other public schools in the same towns.

Continued failure to sustain funding of charters at levels commensurate with the economies in which they operate may result in dire loss of services in the next 2-5 years. It is unjust and outrageous that some children are threatened with losing significant programming simply because other schools are more entrenched and more expensive to run (without offering better results, I might add).

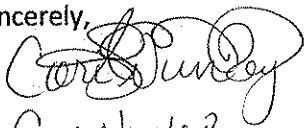
This is what would save charter schools:

1. Funding Equity: charter school students should get the same funding they would at any other school. This can be accomplished naturally and sustainably if a money-follows-the-child model is adopted. However, charters cannot wait for such a formula to be implemented. The state needs to assist in the short term regardless of long term reform.
2. Promised expansion seats for next year: Failing to grant these would be destructive both to charter schools and to families on their long waiting lists.
3. ABSOLUTELY NO CUTS: Charters already operate at levels far below where any other district is even in danger of being cut to.

I have grave fears that the climate of extreme thrift that grips our nation is being taken too far. Resulting cuts and flat-funding may do more damage than the deficit spending that Dannel Malloy is taking such pains to avoid. The budget crisis is not the only crisis. We also have a crisis in public education whose consequences will be much more concrete and intractable than the consequences of a few years in the red.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from your constituents. We need you to fix the untenable situation for charter schools, which have made such great contributions to my community and to communities across the state.

Sincerely,


Cori Nurley

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Arthur T. Nunley